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Overcast sky masks solar eclipse

Bad weather and social distancing norms prevented many across India from witnessing the celestial phenomenon

1. A narrow stretch in northern India that included parts of Rajasthan, Haryana and Uttarakhand got to see the ring of fire. The rest of the country got to witness only a partial eclipse
2. Scores of temples, including Tirupati Balaji temple and the 'Chardham' shrines of Uttarakhand, closed on Saturday night and reopened for prayers only on Sunday afternoon once the eclipse was over
3. The partial phase of the eclipse began at 9.16 am and lasted till 3.04 pm. The annular phase began at 10.19 am and ended at 1.58 pm. The phenomenon was live-streamed online owing to Covid-19

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Army commanders on LAC get a free hand

Chinese Ambassador Sun Weidong summoned to lodge strong protest against the June 15 violence in Galwan area

MAYANK SINGH AND PUSHKAR BANAKAR @ New Delhi

WHILE giving Army commanders along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) the freedom to improvise, depending on Chinese aggression, India on Sunday summoned Chinese Ambassador Sun Weidong to lodge a strong protest against the June 15 violent face-off.

It also emerged that the US is talking to both sides to try and defuse the border crisis. "It is a very tough situation. We are talking to India. We are talking to China. They have got a big problem there. They have come to blows, and we will see what happens. We will try and help them out," US President Donald Trump told reporters at the White House.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh held an hour-long meeting with Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat and the three service chiefs to assess the LAC situation. Taking independent decisions to deal with the 'belligerence' of the Chinese troops was discussed and re-emphasised, sources said.

The surprise Chinese attack on June 15 on Indian soldiers in Galwan's Patrolling Point 14 with rods and bamboo sticks studded with nails came as a rude shock to the soldiers bound by protocols. "Indian Army's discipline and commitment towards the protocols was misused by the Chinese troops who ambushed them in a planned manner, which led to the loss of 20 lives. Now the commanders are free to improvise their reactions befitting the Chinese actions and to reply them in their own language," a senior officer said.

An important indication came from Finger 4, which has been the most complicated stand-off point. "We have been asked not to hold ourselves but to show strength at Finger 4 after the Galwan incident," a source said.

Weidong's summoning comes days after both sides blamed each other for the June 15 face-off. CONTINUED ON: P7

VERY TOUGH SITUATION

"It is a very tough situation. We are talking to India. We are talking to China. They have got a big problem there," says US President Donald Trump

'China's hostility breaks pattern of three decades'

BANSY KALAPPA @Bengaluru

FORMER foreign secretary and former Ambassador to China Nirupama Menon Rao, in an interview to *TNIE*, drew attention to a definite and perceptible change in China's terms of engagement with India, and felt it would be a harbinger of a paradigm shift going into the future.

"We are seeing a very hostile and violently assertive face of China, which is quite at variance with their behaviour in the past three decades of constructive engagement," she said.

Asked if it can ever be business as usual after the Galwan standoff, she said, "I presume there will be a slowing down of bilateral contacts and that a degree of chill will set in the short and possibly medium-term."

On PM Modi's statement not being in sync with the MEA position, she said, "Regrettably, various interpretations about what the PM said were rife. It could have been obviated if immediate steps were taken to clarify what was said." P7

EXPRESS READ

Trump hints at fresh H1-B curbs

New Delhi: US President Donald Trump has said that he will be announcing fresh visa restrictions in a couple of days to block the entry of certain overseas workers. "We are going to be announcing something tomorrow or the next day on the visas," he said in an interview. P8

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GST to be in play during sale of developed plots

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

In a ruling that is likely to have far-reaching ramifications in the real estate market, Gujarat's Authority of Advance Ruling (AAR) has ruled that the sale of developed plots of land with primary amenities like power or water connections should attract Goods and Services Tax (GST). The addition of such amenities should be seen as a 'supply of service', the authority held.

While AAR rulings are applicable only to the individual applicant and the jurisdictional tax officer in a particular case, industry experts say this ruling will likely be used as a precedent by other jurisdictions. According to the quasi-judicial body, the sale of 'developed plots', where primary amenities like power, water pipelines or even access roads are included, is not the same as the sale of land. CONTINUED ON: P10

- A Police Assistant Sub-Inspector dies, while 21 cops test positive in Bengaluru
- 14 cops quarantined in Vijayapura after 2 dacoits test positive
- Random testing for coronavirus begins in Dharwad district
- The number of sealed-down areas in Shivamogga increases to 12

IN JUST 2 DAYS, STATE CROSSES 1,000 CASES

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

KARNATAKA on Sunday saw its fastest and biggest spike in the number of cases, taking the tally from 8,000 to 9,150 in just two days, with 453 cases added in a single day.

Bengaluru saw its biggest daily spike with a whopping 196 cases being reported -- the largest contributor to the Sunday's tally, which has skyrocketed the numbers.

The state also reported five deaths, three of which are from Bengaluru and two from Bidar, taking the Covid-19 toll to 137.

At least 136 of the total 453 cases added on Sunday were patients with Influenza Like Illness (ILI).

The worrisome indicator is the number of days taken to cross each 1,000 cases, which has sharply fallen from 65 days for the first 1,000-mark, to just two days from 8,000 to 9,000.

Also, it took 10 days for the figures to double from 1,000 to 2,000, 11 days to go from 2,000 to 4,000, and 17 days from 4,000 to 8,000, official data showed.

However, with 5,618 recoveries and discharges (225 added on Sunday), the active Covid-19 cases are still under control, at 3,391.

There were cases of super-spreaders in Gadag, Bagalkot and Davanagere districts. FULL REPORT: P4

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